

Call for Abstracts:

Black Studies Trajectories and Futures in Canada

We are seeking submissions for a scholarly initiative that will produce both a special journal issue and an edited book volume, focused on the institutionalization, growth, and future directions of Black Studies in Canada. This initiative will focus on the networks, individuals, and collective efforts that have shaped this growing field, as well as the barriers and possibilities encountered along the way. In exploring the historical and contemporary dimensions of Black Studies, this initiative aims to foster critical dialogue and collective vision for the future of the field in Canada’s higher education landscape.

This project is part of a national initiative supported by SSHRC and Africa and Black Diaspora Studies (ABLD) at McMaster University, building on the recent [Black Futurities: (Re](https://abld.humanities.mcmaster.ca/event/black-futurities-reimagining-black-studies-in-canada/)*[)](https://abld.humanities.mcmaster.ca/event/black-futurities-reimagining-black-studies-in-canada/)*[Ima](https://abld.humanities.mcmaster.ca/event/black-futurities-reimagining-black-studies-in-canada/)*[g](https://abld.humanities.mcmaster.ca/event/black-futurities-reimagining-black-studies-in-canada/)*[ining](https://abld.humanities.mcmaster.ca/event/black-futurities-reimagining-black-studies-in-canada/)[Black](https://abld.humanities.mcmaster.ca/event/black-futurities-reimagining-black-studies-in-canada/)[Studies](https://abld.humanities.mcmaster.ca/event/black-futurities-reimagining-black-studies-in-canada/)[in](https://abld.humanities.mcmaster.ca/event/black-futurities-reimagining-black-studies-in-canada/)[Canada](https://abld.humanities.mcmaster.ca/event/black-futurities-reimagining-black-studies-in-canada/)conference held on May 31, 2024. Contributors whose abstracts are selected will be invited to develop their work into full papers, to be considered for inclusion in either a special issue of an academic journal or an edited book volume. Details regarding the publishers and timelines for both publication options will be shared down the line. In addition, contributors will be invited to workshop their drafts at a national conference in May 2025, providing an opportunity for feedback and collective discussion alongside emerging and established scholars, activists, and community practitioners.

# Context and Objectives of the Special Issue

The murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020 spurred a series of global protests challenging systemic anti-Black racism, and increased visibility and momentum around demands for Black representation and equity across higher education institutions in the Global North. In the Canadian context, institutional developments such as the ‘Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion’ as well as SSHRC’s ‘Action Plan for Black Researchers (2024–2029)’, reflect some of the collective actions and institutional developments emerging in this time. The increased momentum is also reflected in attempts to advance the institutionalization of Black Studies in Canada through the expansion of Black Studies courses, minors, certificates and programs and emergence of Black faculty cluster hires. However, the form and nature of this institutionalization presents several new concerns including a need to better locate Canada within broader global Black Studies, attention to the resourcing and sustainability of these programs, and a grappling with theoretical traditions and curricular models. This initiative reflects a desire to create space for dialogue among Black scholars, students and communities in this transitional moment, and a growing urgency to thoughtfully respond to these concerns and questions facing the field.

Some of the specific objectives guiding this initiative include the following:

1. **Trace Intellectual and Social Genealogies**: Explore the intellectual roots, social movements,

and public discourses shaping Black Studies in Canada and their intersections and divergences

from other global Black Studies traditions.

2. **Assess the Black Studies Ecosystem**: Identify the assets, gaps, and challenges in the

contemporary Black Studies landscape in Canada, considering intergenerational networks,

institutional resources, global social movements, and local political dynamics.

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1. **Examine Anti-Black Racism**: Analyze how historical and systemic anti-Black racism intersects with these processes, shapes the field, and ignites forms of resistance, strategies and practices that have emerged to confront and transform these challenges.
2. **Shape the Future of Black Studies**: Reflect on contemporary migration waves, identity formations, and sociopolitical realities, as well as student and emerging scholar perspectives to imagine future directions for Black Studies in Canada.

# Potential Topics

We encourage abstracts for papers that will address themes such as:

* 1. Curricular development and/or theoretical foundations for Black Studies courses, certificates, programs, departments and institutes.
  2. Undergraduate and graduate student experiences and perspectives within Black Studies in Canada.
  3. The influences, continuities and/or divergences with global Black Studies traditions (e.g., U.S., U.K.) on Canadian contexts.
  4. The emergence and impact of Black faculty cluster hires and other institutional responses to social movements following the post-2020 Black Lives Matter movements.
  5. The diversity of Blackness in Canada, including contemporary migration waves and diasporic groups, and its impact and/or relevance the constructions of Blackness in the field.
  6. The relationship between Black Studies and African Studies and/or Caribbean Studies in Canada.
  7. Building collectivity and community within Black Studies networks in Canada.
  8. Joy, wellness, self-care, pain and/or strength in the face of systemic pressures in the academy.
  9. The impact of anti-Black racism on Black scholarship, the careers of Black academics, and the institutionalization (or lack thereof) of Black Studies in Canada.
  10. Exploring the role of collaborations with communities, artists, and activists in shaping Black Studies in Canada.
  11. Intersectionality and Black experiences and scholarship in Canada, including contributions of Black feminist and queer theory, gendered distribution of care work within the academy, and the role of disability and other intersecting identities in shaping Black academic experiences.
  12. Strategies for decolonizing Black Studies curricula and institutional practices in Canadian contexts.
  13. Teaching, remembering, and memorializing of Black Canadian histories in curricula and academic spaces.
  14. Innovative pedagogical approaches to Black Studies and their potential for reshaping the field.
  15. The relationship between Black Studies and political mobilization within Canadian social justice movements.





We also welcome submissions exploring other topics aligned with the special issue’s core objectives.

# Submission, Review Process and Timeline

* **Abstracts**: 300-400 words, outlining the proposed paper’s focus, contribution, methods and alignment with the initiative’s goals.
* **Deadline for Abstracts**: January 31st, 2025. Abstracts will be reviewed by a team, and selected contributors will be invited to submit full papers to either the special issue journal or edited book volume.
* **Draft Papers Due**: Full papers, in draft form, will be due in April 2025 (exact date TBA).
* **Workshop Presentation**: Contributors will be invited to present their drafts at the Black Futurities Workshop and Conference in May 2025. This event will include feedback sessions and discussions to refine individual papers and the overarching framework of the special issue

and edited volume. **Note**: Selected contributors will have **access to funding (amount will depend on availability)** to support a portion of conference-related expenses.

* **Final papers will be due** in the summer of 2025. Exact dates TBA.

**How to Submit**

Please submit abstracts by January 31, 2025, via email to [abld@mcmaster.ca,](mailto:abld@mcmaster.ca) with the subject line: “**Black Studies Abstract Submission.**”

For other inquiries, please contact [abld@mcmaster.ca](mailto:abld@mcmaster.ca) and someone from the project team will be in touch.